(e) The coking coal is being imported mainly for two reasons:—

(i) To bridge the gap between the requirement and indigenous availability.

(ii) To improve the quality of overall blend for technological reasons for improving blast furnace.

Industrially backward districts

1059. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the Industrially backward districts in India vis-a-vis Madhya Pradesh;

(b) to what extent the new industrial policy has attempted to remove this backwardness; and

(c) the details of steps taken to remove industrial backwardness in these districts of Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Backward districts in the country were identified in the early 70s for the purpose of granting Central Investment Subsidy. The list of identified districts is enclosed as Annexure. [*See* appendix 179, Annexure 21] The Central Investment Subsidy Scheme ceased to exist in September, 1988 and the list of districts which were identified for the purpose of grant of Central Investment Subsidy, therefore, also ceased to have relevance. However, an exercise for identification of backward districts/areas/talukas is in hand in the Ministry of Finance.

(b) After the announcement of new Indistrial Policy and introduction of various measures aimed at liberalisation of the economy the main responsibility of industrialisation of backward areas/districts rests with the State Governments concerned and most of them have been operating various incentive Schemes for their development. Central Government supplements their efforts to the extent possible.

(c) Presently the Government of India is operating the Growth Centre Scheme which aims at promoting industrialisation of backward areas. Under the Scheme, Madhya Pradesh has been allotted 6 (six) Growth Centres at Borai (district Durg), Chainpura (district Guna), Ghirongi (district Bhind), Kheda (district Dhar), Satlapur (district Raisen) and Siltara (district Raipur).

An amount of Rs. 3853.00 lakhs has been released by way of Central assistance towards these Growth Centres.

Under the Integrated Infrastructure Development Scheme, one Centre has been approved at Village Nadan Totla, District Satna in Madhya Pradesh.

Implementation of the Act for providing equal opportunities to disabled persons

1060. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 which was notified by the previous Government has yet to be implemented as the bye-laws, rules and regulations have not been framed so far;

(b) whether due to absence of bye-laws and regulations neither the recommended vital statutory bodies have been abolished nor important schemes formulated for the handicapped;

(c) whether in the absence of these regulatory bodies, schools, colleges and other Government agencies are flouting the Act with impunity; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard and when this Act is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) The Act has been enforced w.e.f. 7.2.96 Various provisions of the Act have to be implemented progresively. Full and complete implementation of the Act is not entirely dependant upon formulating and notifying the rules. However, the Rules under the Act have been framed by the Central Government and are in the process of finalisation in consultation with other Central Government Ministries before its notification.

(b) Establishing the statutory body at the centre and formulation of the schemes is not entirely dependent on the framing of rules. However, the post of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has since been created

and the Central Coordination Committee is being constituted. Necessary steps have also been initiated to formulate the important schemes.

(c) No such instance has come to the notice of this Ministry.

(d) The implementation of the Act is a continuous process and the requisite actions have already been started in right earnest.

India losing $400 million to Russia under debt repayment scheme

1061. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "India losing $400 million to Russia under debt repayment scheme" as reported in the Statement dated 23rd September, 1996;

(b) if so, whether Government are losing millions of dollars in hard currency yearly due to reported misuse by Russian importers;

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof; and

(d) the corrective measures Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BULLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Under the Inter-Governmental arrangements between India and Russia in 1993, the rupee debt owed by India to Russia is to be used exclusively for India's exports of goods and services to Russia. Some allegations of diversion of exports consignments to third country destinations through production of fake landing certificates, switching of cargoes on high seas, etc., have come to light. These would constitute violations of the Inter-Governmental arrangements agreed between India and Russia in 1993 and of the relevant customs procedures and adversely affect our exports to hard currency markets.

(d) Government takes a serious view of such irregularities and are committed to check any illegal diversion of export consignments meant for Russia under the debt repayment route to third countries. Apart from greater vigilance by the Governments enforcement agencies, such diversion is proposed to be prevented through the following additional measures under consideration:—

(i) Exports through consignment sales by way of customs bonded warehouses in Russia.

(ii) Conclusion of a bilateral Customs Cooperation Agreement with the Government of Russia to facilitate better monitoring of export consignments by Customs authorities of the two countires.

(iii) Insistence upon the Russian side to provide satisfactory proof of landing for export consignments.

Decline in export of Indian wheat

1062. PROF. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian wheat has been washed out of the international market, if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether the export quota of wheat has been reduced;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and details of quota now fixed;

(d) the direction of trade for wheat; and

(e) Indian's position, price-wise vis-a-vis other competitors in wheat exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) No Sir, A total quantity of 1078653 MTs of wheat valued at Rs. 668.99 Crores has been exported during the period April-Septgmber, 1996. (Source: DGCI&S, Calcutta).

(b) and (c) Keeping in view the lesser production/ procurement of wheat during 1996-97, the export ceiling of wheat for the current year has been fixed at 10 lakh MTs of non-durum wheat and 5 lakh MTs of durum wheat.

(d) Country-wise details of exports are available in the monthly bulletin/annual numbers published by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Calcutta, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.